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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S. BEEF IMPORTS TO TAIWAN,  
U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage from November 7 through 9 on the controversy and aftermath of the Taiwan government's decision to allow the import of U.S. beef and beef products; on developments in cross-Straits relations; and on U.S. President Barack Obama's upcoming trip to Asia. Almost all papers reported on the remarks by Jeffrey Bader, senior director for East Asian Affairs at the U.S. National Security Council, at the Brookings Institute on November 6, in which he said President Obama will not touch on the issue of Taiwan's status in his upcoming trip to China.

¶2. Editorials and op-ed pieces in Taiwan's papers from November 7 through 9 continued to focus on the controversy caused by the Ma administration's decision to allow the import of U.S. beef and beef products. The pro-independence "Liberty Times" ran an editorial and a column lambasting the Ma administration for failing to safeguard Taiwan's sovereignty and protect the well being of its people by signing an "unequal treaty" with the United States. An op-ed in the KMT-leaning "China Times" by a former DPP legislator also condemned the Ma administration for belittling Taiwan by failing to defend the island's right as Seoul did in 2008. An op-ed in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily," however, called for an end to the farce over U.S. beef. The article said Taiwan's overall interests will be endangered if it insists on renegotiating the beef deal with the United States. A separate "Apple Daily" piece said the resolution to the beef controversy is for the Ma administration to acknowledge its fault and to seek remedy from the United States. An op-ed in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" discussed the lessons to be learned from the beef debacle, while an editorial in the conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" said it is the upcoming island elections that have created all the farce over U.S. beef. With regard to U.S.-China-Taiwan relations, a "Taipei Times" op-ed discussed the pitfalls and possibilities in President Obama's Taiwan line. A "China Post" editorial and an editorial in the pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" each expressed their hopes for Obama on U.S.-China relations when he visits Beijing in November. End summary.

### ¶3. U.S. Beef Imports to Taiwan

A) "Randomly Kowtowing to Other Countries While Acting too Arbitrarily to Its Own People"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 680,000] editorialized (11/7):

"...Handling foreign affairs according to its own wishful thinking and being incompetent are part of the essence of the Ma administration. What's worse is that it is not only muddleheaded and stupid toward other countries but also acting arbitrarily to its own people. Taking the opening [of Taiwan's market] to U.S. beef as an example, the Ma administration has deceived the public, shown no interest in communicating, lacks credibility and totally disregarded the health and well being of its people. ... The most disgusting

part is that the Ma administration has not only failed to play the role of gatekeeper for the health of the Taiwan people during its talks with the United States, but it has also forced its people to accept whatever deals it has made [with the United States]. ...

"Given the way the Ma administration has been handling the import of U.S. beef -- 'randomly kowtowing to other countries while acting too arbitrarily to its own people,' the Taiwan people have to step forward to force this administration to change its policy and renegotiate a new deal with the United States. The Taiwan people have to try its utmost to stop [the signing of] the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement and the financial Memorandum of Understanding [with China], which will surely put Taiwan in grave danger. ..."

#### B) "Ma Administration IQlicing Taiwan like Salami"

Freelance columnist Hu Wen-hui wrote in a column in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 680,000] (11/9):

"... 'Slicing a salami' is the model that Ma used to handle Taiwan's sovereignty, and its talks with the United States on U.S. beef were nothing but a 'test run' to see how the Taiwan people will react. The agreement that Taiwan will sign with China is actually the 'test salami' that Ma will be slicing. ... Ma's [evil] intent has turned from a 'conspiracy' to an 'open scheme.' Take the protocol for U.S. beef imports as an example. The Ma administration was muddleheaded and incompetent when it signed the unequal treaty [with the United States], and when the people reacted strongly against it and a storm was taking shape because of it, [the Ma administration] then forced its people to accept it, citing the excuse that the protocol is very important for Taiwan-U.S. relations. ...

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"The Ma administration claimed that what we will be eating is [beef] from cattle younger than 30 months, but it was later found out that there was no such a provision in the protocol, except for the letters from two U.S. assistant secretaries. [National Security Council Secretary-General] Su Chi alleged that the letters written by U.S. officials have the same validity as that of the protocol and that the authority of the protocol is higher than [Taiwan's] domestic laws. [Given such logic,] does it mean that the authority of the U.S. official letters is higher than Taiwan's laws? This is the worst case of forfeiting [Taiwan's] sovereignty and humiliating our nation! ..."

#### C) "Political Farce over [U.S.] Beef Can Be Over Now"

Professor Jack Lee from National Open University's Department of Public Administration opined in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 520,000] (11/9):

"... To expand the imports of U.S. beef is an important step for Taiwan's national security strategy, and it is designated to pave the way for future Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) talks between Taiwan and the United States under the [framework] of the World Trade Organization (WTO). ... What is bizarre and confusing was that the DPP has always seen safeguarding the Taiwan-centric awareness as its mission, but now it is strongly demanding that Taiwan and the United States renegotiate the beef deal, a move completely opposite to its long-standing 'anti-China and pro-U.S.' position. All we can say is that this is a political farce over [U.S. beef] made just for the year-end [city mayors' and county magistrates'] elections.

"In reality, the protocol Taiwan signed with the United States [over U.S. beef imports] has adopted stricter standards than the norms set up by the World Organization for Animal Health, and the standards are the same as those revised and adopted by South Korea in the wake of its 'beef storm.' The series of administrative measures that the Department of Health will adopt are akin to substantive moves to block the import of U.S. ground beef and beef offal. Besides, given that the beef importers said they would not import [U.S. beef offal and ground beef]; the local city and county governments have adopted the self-management [policy]; and the consumers have been taught not to eat [such beef], there is hardly any market in Taiwan for U.S. ground beef and beef offal. ...

"How is the Legislative Yuan going to amend the Act Governing Food Sanitation? ... Once the act is amended in the way that will endanger the protocol [Taiwan signed with the United States], Taiwan will surely have to restart talks with the United States, a development that will do serious damage to the mutual trust between Taiwan and the United States. ... If one goes too far in playing the game of domestic politics, Taiwan's international and foreign relations will be harmed, and should it result in the United States adopting retaliatory measures against Taiwan, it will be Taiwan's overall interests that will be endangered. As a result, now is the time to call a halt to the political farce over U.S. beef!"

D) "Using Beef to Hype up Social Panic"

Sun Ching-yu, a senior political commentator, opined in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 520,000] (11/9):

"... In the face of social panic, the only way is to resolve the problem. Initiating a referendum to show opposition to the import of U.S. beef is a campaign, not a resolution. To seek to block the U.S. beef imports via legislation ... [will not work either] as what [we have signed] is an international treaty which cannot be obstructed technically via legislation. The reasonable resolution is to go to the source -- namely, the Ma administration has to acknowledge its fault and seek remedy from the United States. Or it can stop the imports of those controversial parts [of the cattle] for the time being and demand extra guarantees [from the United States]. ..."

E) "Dogged Flattering Will Not Trade Respect in Return"

Former DPP Legislator Julian Kuo wrote in a column in the KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 120,000] (11/9):

"The Ma administration's hasty decision to allow the import of U.S. beef recently has aroused the indignation of the entire country. What is weird was that the head of our Department of Health had sought to defend the United States immediately when the public began to criticize the decision. Not only so, when the opposition party demanded that Taiwan renegotiate the deal [with the United States], our Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded immediately that the move would endanger our national credibility. It is a clear fact that Taiwan has been abused and insulted by the United States, but our government has totally overlooked the fact that it can take U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

advantage of the public opinion [to deal with the United States]. [Given that we have] such a government that belittles itself, it is no wonder that the United States will not take us seriously. ..."

F) "Lessons to Learn from Beef Debacle"

Professor Chou Kuei-tien from National Taiwan University's Graduate Institute of National Development opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (11/8):

"... Just like its predecessor, the government cites various health assessments and claims that the risk of contracting vCJD by eating US beef is one in several hundred million. But don't forget that, three years ago, the government refused to allow imports of US bone-in beef because it said bone-in beef carried a higher risk of mad cow disease. This is contradictory to the reasons currently given for relaxing restrictions on US beef imports. Also do not forget that the US sells around 36 million head of cattle every year, only 1 percent of which is checked for mad cow disease. This means that more than 35 million unchecked cows are exported. We can imagine how high the potential risk of contracting vCJD by eating US beef would be. Both Japan and the EU check each animal they import. Government officials continue to play a numbers game with the public and continue to fail to understand why people are so panicked about US beef. This is the fifth lesson we have learned.

"Officials all the way up to the president claim that strict standards will be used for US beef imports, but would the public believe such claims in the current climate? The central government has not only failed to guard national health, it has also shifted risk liability to individuals. On the one hand, the Cabinet "gently expects" self-discipline of businesspeople, while on the other the

government claims negotiations with Washington were difficult. The logic behind Taiwan's national security concerns remains at the level of developing countries, prioritizing economic development (well, some may prioritize the military) at the expense of Taiwan's already bruised environment and national health. The government should face up to the globalization era's non-conventional safety issues involving ecology, health and food. This is the lesson we must urgently learn."

#### G) "The Beef War Is Now Fought on the Domestic Front"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] (11/7):

"The beef war between Taiwan and the United States is over. But it is being fought on the domestic front now. Why? It's election time! The opposition Democratic Progressive Party isn't spearheading the new war against American beef, which its leaders have claimed is a scheme to poison the people of Taiwan. ... Opposition leaders have since then stepped aside to let the people, businessmen and even Kuomintang local chief executives organize an islandwide boycott of 'unsafe' American bone-in beef and offal, which supposedly has a one in a billion chance to infect consumers with fatal mad cow disease. For their part, these politicians are planning to collect enough signatures to initiate a referendum on such imports from the United States, although they probably know full well it will never be called. ... War or no war over American beef, the Democratic Progressive Party will continue escalating the political upheaval until it wins or loses the all-important local islandwide elections."

#### 14. U.S.-China-Taiwan Relations

##### A) "Pitfalls and Possibilities in Obama's Taiwan Line"

Nat Bellocchi, former AIT Chairman and a special adviser of the Liberty Times Group, opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (11/9):

"... While it is essential to engage China on these issues, we need to ensure that this is not done at the expense of a free and democratic Taiwan. During the past weeks, Chinese spokesmen have called on the US and other international partners to respect China's so-called 'core interests.' It would be good if Obama emphasized clearly that it is a core interest of the US that the future of Taiwan be resolved peacefully and with the express consent of the Taiwanese people. ... The US can play a constructive role if Obama is willing to apply creative thinking and steer away from the pitfalls of the mantras that were recited in the past. The fundamental values of democracy and human rights, for which the US stands, mandate that we are more supportive of the dream of many Taiwanese that their country be accepted as a full and equal member of the international community. That would be change we can believe in."

##### B) "What to Possibly Expect as Obama Heads for China"

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The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] (11/8):

"... Given the tremendous interaction between the United States and mainland China in recent years, the time is ripe for a summit meeting between Obama and Hu. Following last year's global financial crisis, these two countries have become even more interdependent upon each other, with mainland China financing U.S. debt and U.S. imports fueling the mainland's economic development. This phenomenon and its effects on the global economy have recently been dubbed the rise of 'G-2' or 'Chimerica' by some observers. Given Obama's connections to traditionally protectionist groups such as labor unions, this trip should help persuade Obama that free trade brings about more benefits than protectionism. On the other hand, Obama's unprecedented celebrity status in the region will provide him a unique opportunity to communicate directly with ordinary people through his speeches and activities. ...

"For many years, Beijing has sought the signing of a joint

communiqué addressing these highly sensitive issues. But successive U.S. presidents, ranging from George H.W. Bush to Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, have politely declined to sign any joint communiqués or make highly sensitive statements. President Obama would be wise to continue the previous policy of maintaining the status quo and refraining from signing a joint communiqué. Like other presidents in the past, Obama can repeat the diplomatic language of the three communiqués signed in the 1970s and 1980s and the Taiwan Relations Act. When asked to comment about Taiwan matters in public, Obama can conveniently summarize these documents and stay out of trouble. He should also repeat the longstanding U.S. policy of encouraging Taipei and Beijing to resolve their disputes peacefully. ...

"Some observers in Taiwan are fearful that the new American leader might be too accommodating to Beijing's requests. However, President Obama is a very talented public speaker and has proven his familiarity with the Taiwan issue in the past. The situation in the Taiwan Strait today is markedly different from how things were when Bill Clinton and George W. Bush visited mainland China in the past. ... Because of this, Obama would be wise to merely encourage these cross-strait interactions while refraining from making any major policy statements in favor of one side or the other. It is even possible that Obama might make positive statements about Taiwan and the development of democracy here while interacting with his hosts in mainland China."

#### C) "Obama Must Affirm Democracy in Asia"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] (11/9):

"United States President Barack Obama will show whether his new Democratic administration has a cohesive and principled strategy to accommodate the new changes in the Asia - Pacific region when he makes his first official trip to Asia this week. ... President Obama needs to affirm that while engaging China into the international system regime is a top priority, hedging the risks that the PRC may become a major source of instability in global economic, political and democratic order is no less important. However, Obama has rarely touched upon Beijing's continued violation of human rights and rapid expansion of military might since taking office Jan. 20 and Beijing reportedly is pushing for more concessions by pressing Obama to publicly recognize Chinese sovereignty over Tibet, a concession which the PRC regime would likely exploit to bolster its claims over Taiwan or other territories.

"Let us remind President Obama that Article One of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights posits that 'all people have the right of self-determination' and that concessions on this principle for the sake of rhetorical promises for cooperation could pull the cornerstone out from hopes for lasting genuine security in Asia and democratic change within China and offer no assured benefit for U.S. long-term core interests. We urge President Obama to utilize his planned public speech in Shanghai to instead send a clear message to the Chinese people on the need to open up the PRC's authoritarian political system and embrace the universal values of democracy and human rights.

"While seeking Beijing's substantive cooperation on climate change and other pressing global issues, Obama should ask the PRC leadership to make 'strategic reassurances' to turn away from military expansionism and repression and toward peace-making and democratic opening. While it is widely believed that Taiwan will not be a focal point of Obama's meeting with PRC State Chairman Hu Jintao, we urge the U.S. president to address the Taiwan issue in a clear manner in line with long-term U.S. interests and democratic principles and avoid taking the recent apparent stability in U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

cross-strait relations for granted. Besides Beijing's arms build-up and its refusal to abandon the use of military means to annex Taiwan, President Ma Ying-jeou's KMT administration has made excessive concessions to the PRC which risk Taiwan's substantive independence, economic autonomy and prosperity, international visibility and freedom of democratic choice for our future. We urge President Obama to clearly express to the Chinese leaders that all issues between the PRC and Taiwan 'must be resolved peacefully and

with the assent of the people of Taiwan.'"

STANTON